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-submitted by the Political Committee of the LSA/LSO.

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Building the Revolutionary Party in Canada

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Time to Chart the Road Ahead

Not for several decades have the objective conditions for building the revolutionary party in Canada been so favorable, nor has the revolutionary vanguard been so well placed to take advantage of them. Our 1970 convention will take stock of several years of rapid growth which have brought us forces and influence far beyond any level previously achieved by Canadian Trotskyism. With these gains come new possibilities for growth and new responsibilities. At this convention we must go beyond the immediate tactical problems of our work to chart out, in the context of these new forces and opportunities the road forward to building the mass revolutionary party indispensable to resolving the overriding crisis of our epoch – the crisis of proletarian leadership.

Among the widening layer of the new generation of radical youth, revolutionary organization has become a central point of discussion. A good proportion of these new forces sense how Stalinist and social democratic leaderships have missed if not betrayed opportunities for revolutionary social change. New layers are trying to assimilate this experience and come to grips with the problem of forming an effective force for socialist revolution. There is a broad receptivity to the need for revolutionary change. How is it to be launched; what kind of movement is required to lead it – these questions are under heated discussion.

Because no one, including the Trotskyists, has yet succeeded in building a mass party in Canada on the Leninist model, some would challenge the Trotskyist contention that such a party is possible. Some, agreeing to its desirability, hold that its construction should be postponed to the indefinite future, and that some substitute is acceptable in the interim.

0n the other hand, increasing numbers in their search for the authentic Leninism of the Russian Revolution are coming towards Trotskyism. The League for Socialist Action-Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière is winning a hearing among youth as never before. Trotskyism has become the focus of the discussion about revolutionary organization among socialist youth. A significant barometer is the adhesion in the past year to the Trotskyist youth, the Young Socialists-Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes, of entire "groups" of revolutionary youth

leaders; the leadership of the New Brunswick Socialists and the Saskatchewan-based Committee for a Socialist Movement.

Aims of the Discussion

The experience of well over a half century has proven in its totality the Leninist thesis that a revolutionary vanguard is necessary for socialist victory. This party must be built around the full Marxist program, and must be a centralized and disciplined combat organization to implement this program in leading the working class to revolutionary victory. It must be deeply rooted in the working class and its organizations. It must be organized and led on the broader scale where all the decisive questions are now posed; it must be a world party of socialist revolution. It must develop the full internal democracy required for the education of its forces and the development of its program.

Our convention must discuss the full range of problems raised in working out our strategy for building the revolutionary party in Canada. Specifically we must examine:

Accepting the need for a Leninist-type combat party; is it possible to build such a party in Canada today?
What kind of a program does the party require?
Why must it be build on the international level?
What is the role of revolutionary cadre in party-building?
What kind of a leadership does it require?
What are the responsibilities of the members of the vanguard organization? How is it shaped by democratic centralism?
How must the vanguard organization intervene in mass struggles?
What is the relationship of the LSA-LSO of' today to the revolutionary mass party of tomorrow?

Crisis of World Capitalism

The Leninist strategy of vanguard parties is rooted in the actuality of the workers struggle for power on a world scale in this century.

"Recognizing that our epoch was characterized by imperialist wars, proletarian revolutions, and colonial uprisings, Lenin deliberately set out at the beginning of this century to form a party able to turn such cataclysmic events to the advantage of socialism." (*Cannon, Fifty Years of World Revolution p.349).*

This revolutionary diagnosis of the crisis of world capitalism

is the promise of the Leninist organizational strategy. Far from stabilizing since Lenin's day, world imperialism has been caught in a deepening succession of profound crises affecting every area of its rule, each of which poses the necessity of proletarian revolution and propels forward the forces which can achieve it. A progressively larger portion of the world has achieved workers power, and broken free of capitalist rule.

The New Rise of World Revolution

The present upsurge of revolutionary struggles around the world has created uniquely favorable conditions for building the revolutionary vanguard. The 1969 World Congress of the Fourth International registered a turn in the world situation in its main resolution: *"The New Rise of World Revolution*". Leading off from the victorious resistance of the Vietnamese people against the imperialist counter-offensive, the colonial revolution has experienced a significant recovery. At the same time the imperialist countries have experienced the first widespread revolutionary struggles in twenty years, and broad mass anti-bureaucratic struggles have broken out in the workers states.

"Regardless of the immediate vicissitudes of these movements," the Congress report on this document stated, "it is clear that they reflect extremely profound social crises and that those who are counting on a rapid solution of these crises by a combination of reforms and repression, as do the bourgeoisie, and the bureaucrats, are deceiving themselves . . . Movements of such scope cannot be dammed up or broken in the space of a few weeks or a few months. They will continue at least for several years, thus increasing the chances that the process of building a new revolutionary leadership will come to fruition before the pendulum begins to swing decisively in the other direction."

The report concluded: "The Fourth International (the World Party of Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky) finds itself today at a turning point in its history . . . on the one hand there is the new rise of the world revolution in which the imperialist countries have assumed greater weight and which has taken some of the so-called classical forms of socialist revolution – with more massive intervention by the industrial proletariat in the process. Secondly, there is the appearance of a new youth vanguard on a world scale . . . and within this new youth vanguard, the influence of the old traditional leaderships of the workers movement is in rapid decline, if not, in some places, virtually vanishing." Both the favorable turn and the changed character of the world struggle, and the relative weakness

of our opponents in the key youth sector, have created a most favorable conjuncture for the revival of genuine Leninism, concretized in the building of Trotskyist vanguard organizations.

The Coming Canadian Revolution

The 1968 LSA-LSO convention noted the indications of these revolutionary opportunities in Canada. The nationalist ferment in Quebec has gained increasing momentum. Working class militancy has advanced noticeably over the level of the '50s, as seen in the consolidation of the NDP and the sustained strike wave of recent years. A broad ferment has spread among youth giving birth to a significant revolutionary-minded current in the student movement. The Canadian ruling class, threatened by the growing economic problems before world capitalism, has decreasing flexibility in responding to this social ferment.

Canadian capitalism faces a gathering crisis which even more sharply poses the need for socialist revolution and is setting into motion the forces which can achieve it. The revolutionary perspective of the LSA/LSO is no visionary dream; it is the only practical program for Canada today.

Are Mass Vanguard Parties Impossible?

In fifty years since the October Revolution, no efforts to build a mass revolutionary vanguard party have succeeded. The working class has by and large continued to support reformist or Stalinist leaderships. Does this not prove that these leaderships, not the revolutionaries, better reflect the needs of the class? Should the construction of vanguard parties not be ditched as impossible, as utopian? Or should it be tabled indefinitely in the hope that if radicals do their own thing now, who knows, some lasting revolutionary formation may come of it later on ?

Behind these familiar arguments is the premise that "the workers are getting the leadership they deserve." Discussing this point of view in his pamphlet *The Class, the Party and the Leadership,* Trotsky compared it to the "evolutionary-liberal epigram: ‘every people gets the government it deserves.’ Yet the Russian people were ruled by Tsarist, bourgeois-liberal and Soviet regimes in the compass of one year, 1917! How to explain this paradox? The secret is this," Trotsky stated, "that a people is comprised of hostile classes, and the classes themselves are comprised of different and in part antagonistic layers . . . Governments are the product of the struggle of these classes and layers and the action of external forces (wars etc.) and once established,

they may endure much longer than the relationship of forces which produced them – why else revolutions, coup d'états, etc. And the same dialectic," Trotsky points out, "must be applied in explaining how the leadership of a class is determined."

How a New Leadership Wins Support

The old leaderships are the product of conflicts within the class, and once established, tend to rise above the class and become predisposed to the pressure of other classes. "The proletariat may 'tolerate' for a long time a leadership that has already suffered a complete inner degeneration but has not as yet had the opportunity to express this degeneration amid great events. A great historic shock is necessary to reveal sharply the contradiction between the leadership and the class."

Only through profound experiences can the class become convinced that a new leadership is firmer, more reliable than the old. It is not as simple as if "the proletariat were in a shoe store, selecting a new pair of boots." Of course this process is greatly speeded up in a revolutionary situation, and a party can swiftly acquire strength. But even then the new party must be present prior to the crisis; "the class must inherit from the previous period strong revolutionary cadres capable of utilising the collapse of the old leading party." A negative example is the experience of recent years in Latin America, where the lack of such cadres and of an effective political alternative has permitted the Stalinist parties to recover in large measure from the crisis provoked by the Cuban revolution.

The Objective Conditions are Now Favorable

The continuing domination of Canada's organized working class by a reformist leadership reflects the objective problems confronting the revolutionary vanguard over several decades. During the labor upsurges of the '30's and the '40's, the revolutionary-minded workers streamed into the Stalinized Communist Party, which still enjoyed in their eyes the full authority of the victorious Russian Revolution, and thereby accumulated an effective and strategically placed cadre. These forces were corrupted, demoralized and dispersed by the successive ultra-leftist and popular front policies of the CP.

Since that period, Canadian capitalism has enjoyed an extended period of continuing expansion, coinciding with a peak of world imperialist power. Under these conditions the Trotskyist forces that carried forward the struggle for a revolutionary party were swimming

against a powerful current, unable to win a hearing from the masses and meeting great difficulties in replenishing and renewing their own forces out of the reduced level of mass struggles.

As we have seen, these conditions are being overcome in Canada and on a world scale. Stalinism is much reduced in strength, particularly in Canada where its influence among radicalizing youth is very small. Capitalist stability is eroding, and the main objective obstacles to the building of the party are receding. Party-building will require persistent, patient and often mundane work. But we stand before opportunities which, if we can grasp them, can bring us rapid progress in building the party.

Can Party-Building be Postponed?

Some of our opponents have felt compelled to accept verbally the need for a vanguard party while seeking to postpone party-building to the indefinite future. Others have developed their own "theory of stages" during which a period of building grass-roots organizations must proceed the moment when these groupings are somehow ready to coalesce into a party,

History records many revolutionary opportunities which came to naught – what was lacking was the revolutionary party. In the French 1968 revolutionary upsurge student organizations were able to spark a general strike, but student revolutionaries had none of the connections in the working class, their organizations lacked the roots there – necessary to contest the leadership of the strike with the Communist Party – roots that only the preparatory work of a vanguard organization could have developed. Our ability to intervene and win massive new forces in a situation of revolutionary upsurge depends chiefly on the strength of the foundations that we are able to lay today.

The program for a revolutionary party cannot be synthesized at the last moment or copied out of some manual. It must be preserved, defended, developed and proven again and again in struggle. The striking power of a vanguard organization can only be the achievement coming from long experience. And a patient work of propaganda and record of Intervention in mass struggle is required to gain a hearing from the working class.

Those who postpone the task of party-building in fact deny it. They accommodate themselves to all the limitations and short-sightedness of the milieu to which they orient, and succeed only in liquidating their own forces. The time at our disposal is not unlimited. Our task is of the most desperate urgency. Our responsibility is to ensure that every moment and every opportunity is fully utilized in building our forces towards overcoming this, the central crisis of our

epoch.

Program: the Ultimately Decisive Factor

What role will the Trotskyist movement, the LSA-LSO, play in this process ? What gives us our conviction in our unique and indispensable role ? It is the correctness of our program and the ultimately decisive role of program for any political organization. Many groups have started out with larger forces, more established figures in the mass movement or a more radical sounding rhetoric than ourselves. But all experience shows that no Marxist organization can survive as an agglomeration of programmatically diverse or disunited forces, or as merely the extension of the influence of some mass figure. No more can it survive if its program does not respond to the revolutionary needs of the workers. Without a correct program, a Marxist organization is a bluff, which cannot survive the first serious test of experience.

The program is more than the definition of the goal or tactical recipes for the present conjuncture. The revolutionary program is the totality of the experience and conclusions of Marxism over a century-long struggle. It is contained in the statutes and theses of the first four congresses of the Communist International and the congealed experiences of the world parties of the Fourth International and its congresses. Confronting the masses it takes on the form of the transitional program, a series of "transitional demands" directed to helping "the masses in the process of their daily struggle find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution." The demands "stem from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and lead unalterably to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

What Is Trotskyism?

What is Trotskyism? Many view it as no more than a curious relic of the past, or dismiss it as part of "old left" hangovers. Many view Trotskyists as dogmatic hairsplitters, whose theory is incomprehensible to the uninitiated and generally irrelevant to today's struggles. In fact, Trotskyism is simply Marxism today – the embodiment of all the experiences of Marxists over the past 120 years. It is distinguished from all other tendencies by basic tenets which can be quickly summarized.

Trotskyism holds first that socialism can be established only by the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist state, the expropriation of the means of production, the establishment of workers' power. This

distinguishes it from social democratic belief that we will realize socialism through the accumulation of piecemeal reforms and that the present state apparatus is socially neutral and is a sufficient instrument for social change. This divides it from the "revolutionary reformists" of the Waffle caucus, for example, who project a patchwork of socialist demands without an understanding of the class character of the capitalist state and the necessity of overthrowing it through revolutionary means. This marks Trotskyism off from Stalinists of both Moscow and orthodox Peking varieties who foresee the next leap forward not as socialist revolution but as some "advanced democracy" which seeks no more than to curb imperialism and monopolies without a break from the capitalist framework.

Trotskyism holds that socialism can be achieved only through mass struggle. It rejects ballot box theories of social change as it does elitist concepts that the action of a valiant minority through violent confrontations etc. will suffice to bring the system down in ruins or at least spark its collapse through a spontaneous uprising. Our political intervention aims at promoting mass action to involve steadily larger numbers around transitional demands which lead the the masses into the struggle for revolutionary change.

Trotskyism rejects anarchist concepts that foresee the immediate abolition of the state by revolution. It holds that the workers must not merely smash the bourgeois state. They must build their own state to beat back capitalist resistance and plan the construction of socialist society – before the state begins to wither away in the process of achieving a classless socialist world society.

Trotskyism proclaims the world character of the struggle first enunciated by Marx and Engels in their call: "workers of the world unite", and fully developed in Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution. It refutes the Menshevik-Stalinist theory of stages through which imperialism can allegedly be overthrown in the colonial world (and even Canada!) without a socialist revolution. Trotsky explained that the democratic anti-imperialist tasks in the colonial world require workers power, which in turn puts the socialist tasks on the order of the day – an analysis confirmed by the Russian and each subsequent socialist revolution. The revolution itself is international. Socialism can be realized only on the world scale. In contrast to social democrats who stand loyal to the interests of their national ruling class, or Stalinism whose loyalty is to the narrow national interests of the ruling bureaucracies of Moscow or Peking, Trotskyism stands loyal to the interests of world revolution.

Trotskyism is distinguished from all brands of social democrats and centrists by its insistence on the need for a revolutionary

party of world dimensions. While Stalinist parties give verbal homage to Lenin, their parties are neither revolutionary not democratic-centralist. Only the Trotskyists have preserved the prototype of the Bolshevik party as the model for the parties they are building.

Many dismiss the bureaucratically deformed workers states of Moscow or Peking varieties as forms of capitalism. Maoists have been unable to analyze the bureaucratic roots of the degeneration of the Soviet Communist Party because it would lead inevitably to conclusions that undermine their own bureaucratic regime. Trotskyism maintains an unconditional defense of all Workers States against capitalism, and has developed the program of political revolution and workers democracy to end bureaucratic misrule in the workers states. The Trotskyists fight for the attainment of immediate aims, but, in the words of the *Communist Manifesto*, work in the movement of the present to represent and take care of the movement of the future. Their program is proven, derived from the whole continuity of experience in struggle since the *Manifesto* was launched. It represents the necessary and indispensable basis for building a revolutionary party.

Our program has been developed through the experience of Marxism over more than a century, and it has been tested and proven in action in the great revolutionary experiences of this century. The major and decisive problems of Marxist theory have been answered – in this sense our program is a finished doctrine. It must be applied sensitively and creatively to new situations as they develop and translated into specific demands which vary according to concrete circumstances.

Where Do We Come From?

The LSA-LSO stands in organizational continuity with the Bolsheviks and their first Canadian adherents. Just as the international Trotskyist movement was formed around the program and cadres of the Russian Left Opposition, the remaining cadre of Bolshevism, the Canadian Trotskyist movement was born with the foundation of the Canadian Communist Party in 1921. The Communist Party of the '20s, Itself a fusion of the best revolutionary elements of every tendency who rallied to the program of soviet power, was a party of great promise. Its basic cadre was excellently placed to take advantage of the labor upsurge of the '30's.

The pioneer forces of the CP were influenced by Maurice Spector, the party's chief theoretician, and the first Trotskyist in the North American Communist movement to protest the onset of an anti-Trotskyist witch-hunt in the Communist International in 1925. The majority of the original CP leadership, including Jack MacDonald, its first secretary, eventually found their way to Trotskyism, while

only Tim Buck went along with every twist and turn in Stalinist policy to survive as a leader of the modern rump CP.

Spector, together with his American co-thinker, James P. Cannon *(SWP leader)*, smuggled the basic Trotskyist program back from the 1928 congress of the Communist International, but he was unable to consolidate a tendency before he was summarily driven out of the party. Soon he was joined by Jack MacDonald. In the '30's they led Canadian Trotskyists in a valiant struggle against the Stalinization of the CP, resisting the massive witch-hunt, ostracization campaign and goon tactics employed against them by Stalinist hooligans establishing their domination over the then formidable CP. The Canadian Trotskyjsts were one of five organizations to respond to Trotsky's original call for the formation of the Fourth International.

The Continuity of the Movement

No sooner had the Canadian Trotskyists responded to the formation of the Fourth-International in 1938 and its call to launch anew the building of a world Bolshevik party, than they were thrust into the Second World War. The Trotskyists were the only tendency to oppose consistently Canada's imperialist participation in World War II, and suffered the first arrest for opposition to the war. Their newspaper was driven underground, their Canada-wide organization savagely crippled, and their cadre to some degree dispersed. If they had been unable, under conditions of the greatest difficulty in the '30's to build a cadre with a strength and continuity equal to that of our American co-thinkers in the SWP, the reconstitution of the Canada-wide organization as the war came to a close by the formation of the Revolutionary Workers Party, showed that the group had survived and grown. The RWP suffered from the general attrition of the left during the height of the Cold War, and anti-communist hysteria.

But in its 1951 convention the RWP adopted the orientation to the CCF which laid the basis for the reconstruction of the movement. A short entry into the CCF, forerunner of the NDP, in 1952-55 brought new forces into the movement, and in the '50's work in the CCF was combined with open work as the Socialist Education League centred around the *Vanguard*, the movement's public newspaper re-launched in 1955.

Achievements of the LSA-LSO

Ten years ago, on the eve of the foundation of the NDP, the 1960 convention decided to launch a public Canada-wide organization, the League for Socialist Action, bringing together in a public framework the hitherto formally independent branches in Toronto and Vancouver. At this convention and in the months following, the LSA

launched its work in the main fields that have been decisive since that time. It adopted the orientation to the New Democratic Party, took the first modest steps toward launching the Young Socialists, began our defense of the Cuban revolution and expanded the anti-war work that was to assume a massive scope around the defense of the Vietnamese revolution.

Since then the movement has leaped forward by every index. Its forces have roughly doubled every three years throughout the decade. The press has developed from a single four-page monthly *Vanguard* to our present effective array of publications in English and in French. A strong youth movement has grown up. The movement has become bi-national, with a firm and tested cadre in Quebec, and has built an effective Canada-wide organization with active forces in fifteen centers. For the first time a united and homogeneous, if still narrow, leadership cadre of the movement has been assembled. The LSA-LSO has successfully met each of the major challenges of the decade: the new rise of Quebec nationalism, the NDP, the student movement, Vietnam, women's liberation.

All this has been achieved in a period of relative class stability, and in a country where the problems of building a centralized movement are staggering. The narrow band of settlement over 3,000 miles long, the economic and political structure highly regionalized; the division into two major component nations – these factors have made it difficult even for the bourgeoisie to maintain its political unity.

Is the LSA-LSO the Revolutionary Party?

Is the LSA-LSO the revolutionary party? Certainly it is not a party in the commonly understood sense that we present ourselves before the masses as a contestant for political power against all other political forces. In this arena, today, it is a supporter and partisan of the New Democratic Party. Nor is it the revolutionary party as it must be, that is required, capable of leading the masses to power. It remains a propaganda group, and a relatively small one at that.

What then distinguishes the LSA-LSO from other groupings now in competition with Trotskyism, or yet to appear? Is Trotskyism merely one tendency among many which, together or in various combinations will make their contribution to the building of a vanguard party?

In so far as we are the only force that carries the program of the proletarian revolution in this country – separate and apart from and in contest with all other formations – we are a party –

the party of the Canadian socialist revolution. As for our forces, however much they may fall short in quantity or quality of what we regard as necessary, as historically required they must be measured by their revolutionary dynamic. They are the possessors of the program of the proletarian revolution; they are the heirs of the revolutionary struggles of the past, and they are the continuators of that struggle today. Our growing forces represent the revolutionary party as it exists today They are what conscious revolutionaries have been able to assemble and educate through immeasurable efforts over past decades. Many component forces must come together to build the revolutionary party. But the LSA/LSO is the indispensable foundation on which it must be built.

The Challenge: Build a Mass Party

Much more is required than mere continuation of our present level of propaganda and activity and our present pace of modest, chiefly one-by-one recruitment. A series of leaps to a qualitatively higher level are required to transform us from a small propaganda group into a mass party of revolutionary action.

A vanguard party cannot hope, except in a revolutionary crisis, to become a mass party, on the scope of the NDP which enrols a good bulk of the organized working class under its banner. Ours is a party of leaders, of the most conscious elements of the class. But to lead the vast majority of the Canadian people in revolutionary action requires a disciplined body of many thousands of activists, deeply rooted in working class organizations; active in the leadership of every sphere of the class struggle, with links and connections to every organization and grouping engaged in an aspect of the anti-capitalist struggle. The party must be able to rally the decisive sectors of the working class under its own banner. Such a party, a small mass party, can grow rapidly in a revolutionary situation, fill out its connections and well-placed cadre with a rapidly expanding mass following, and move out in leading revolutionary action.

To move towards this goal will require a massive recruitment, massive education of new forces, unlike anything we have yet experienced – and most crucial, a qualitative development of the leading cadres of the movement.

We are now engaged in a protracted struggle for hegemony over the socialist forces in this country. We have made considerable headway and established ourselves as the strongest in effective forces of all socialist organizations.

We reject any formal separation of periods of propagandistic and agitational work in the development of the movement. In this

historical juncture of the crisis of capitalism and simultaneously of proletarian leadership, a propaganda group like ourselves can periodically move out to intervene in or initiate mass action, or to conduct agitation aimed at the broad masses.

For some period now our propaganda addressed to vanguard elements has been combined, with agitational interventions, which take advantage of the crisis of revolutionary leadership to move out in actions appealing to the broader masses. Examples have been our election campaigns on the municipal level, and on occasion provincially and federally which have served both to set an example of effective electoral action to NDP activists and socialist forces, and to make us known as the serious force for socialism among the broader masses.

Our intervention in building the NDP left has had a similar dual character, particularly at the NDP's founding convention where we attempted to take advantage of conditions which favored the formation of a mass left. Our work in defense of Vietnam has enabled us to develop leaders known and respected by the entire range of the left, and leadership of a campaign of mass action, while serving as a vehicle to draw new forces to our movement and educate them to our full program. More and more we can involve ourselves in actions which prove the correctness of our program in action. In the coming period we must particularly aim to expand the open work in the name of the LSA-LSO.

We are approaching the next challenge which will be posed with the next major upward turn in the mass struggles – that of beginning the transformation of our movement into a party of mass action.

Why We Are Internationalists

Many voices from the "New Left" have condemned the LSA-LSO for "sectarian and schematic internationalism," for "dragging in international issues not relevant to the building of the revolutionary movement here in Canada." Such criticisms only reflect the ignorance and backwardness of these layers of the student left, immersed in local actions ranging from reformist to utopian, and resentful of having to confront "irrelevant" issues like the defense of the Vietnamese revolution.

It is no accident that Vietnam, like the Palestinian struggle, like all questions of world import, became known as "Trotskyist issues." Our movement has become more immersed in the class struggle in Canada, yet our program is rooted in our international outlook.

The Results of a False International Position - the Fall of the CP

The collapse of the Communist Party of Canada shows in life the decisive role of a party's international outlook. Not long ago a small mass party with the support of a significant sector of the working class, able to elect members of parliament and play a significant independent role in class actions, the CP is now reduced to a tiny remnant without a future, while we rival it in the number of our activists, and have moved ahead of it and profit in the strength of our cadre and our influence among radicalizing youth.

The CP did not lack skilled or able leaders, or historic opportunities. But its position on the decisive international questions of the epoch, the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, the role of Stalinism, "socialism in one country," were false. This led it to adapt to every new monstrosity of Stalinist foreign policy, and carry out every ultraleftist and opportunist turn. From their adherence to the Stalinist international line of peaceful coexistence followed their well-known frontal and consistent opposition to every form of independent labor political action – the decisive factor in destroying their political influence in the Canadian working class.

Building the Fourth International

Our internationalism is no abstract sentiment of brotherhood. It is rooted in the character of the world economy, the world development of productive forces, and the interrelated character of the class struggle. The socialist revolution begins on national foundations, but cannot be completed on this level – a national revolution is only a link in the international chain.

Every major revolutionary upsurge today becomes the occasion of a test of strength with world imperialism and demands that revolutionaries respond not just with statements of solidarity, but with a world strategy that knits every new breakthrough into the ongoing struggle to defeat world imperialism. The vehicle for this struggle must be a world party of socialist revolution – the Fourth International. The Fourth International is indispensable to the development of our program and world outlook; as a section of the FI, the LSA-LSO is committed to integrating its work into the broader effort to build the world revolutionary party.

The Role of Revolutionary Cadres

The decisive role of cadre-building in party construction is described succinctly by James P. Cannon: “The vanguard party cannot be proclaimed by sectarian fiat or created overnight. Its leadership and

membership are selected and sifted out by tests and trials in the mass movement, and in the internal controversies and sharp conflicts over critical policy questions raised at every turn in the class struggle. It is not possible to step over, and even less possible to leap over the preliminary stage in which the basic cadres of the party organize and reorganize themselves in preparation for, and in connection with, the larger job of organizing and winning over broad sections of the masses." (*50 Years of World Revolution,* p. 353)

The organization's strength is not determined by its written program or party statutes, no matter how perfect. They depend on the strength of the party cadres. What are party cadres? They are the leadership of the movement, characterized first of all by their loyalty and dedication to the task of party-building. They must have assimilated the basic program and be able to translate it into a practical course of action. They must have the experiences of the organizational principles and practices of Bolshevism to sustain and guide the functioning of the party and the application of democratic centralism. In them is accumulated the political know-how, the tactical savvy, which no handbook can codify.

The strength of the cadres is the final and decisive gauge of the party's growth. While its development is necessarily uneven, there is no short-cut by which the conscious and difficult process of cadre building can be evaded.

Only in the movement can cadres be developed and preserved only there can revolutionaries be sustained, and find strength to resist the pressures of every kind from a hostile society. We have repeatedly seen how revolutionaries who have broken with the movement have been unable to resist rapid political degeneration and disintegration.

The top priority of the movement is the development of our cadres, and the expansion of our leadership. Our work must be organized to add to the cadre and to renew it, and not exhaust and disperse our accumulated forces. We must forge the unity of the movement, particularly the unity between the work of building the movement itself and the intervention in external areas where comrades are subject to the full pressure of alien class forces.

Building a CadreLeadership

"The problem of the party is the problem of the leadership of the party. A program is basic, but even in the most opportune situation the best of programs cannot gather a movement without the necessary cadre, which plays the same decisive role in relation to the party that the party plays in relation to the class." (Cannon). And

this cadre must know how to function as a collective leadership.

Cannon has summarized the various kinds of mis-leadership which have squandered the cadre resources of vanguard organizations, in his speech *"Factional Struggle and Party Leadership"* in 1953. He mentions the unplanned leadership of talented individual stars, pulling in opposite directions, squandering their energies in personal rivalries and incapable of organizing a sensible division of labor. A second kind of leadership, he continues, is the leadership of a clique, where one finds a certain division of labor, but where unity rests on the feeble bonds of personal relations, and can easily be broken by personal quarrels. A variant is a personal cult, where loyalty to an omniscient leader replaces the collective judgement and division of labor. A fourth form is the permanent faction, where a grouping organized for a specific internal struggle will crystallize and harden, monopolizing the leadership long after the issues which brought it together have vanished.

Our conception of leadership, he concludes, is that of a leading cadre. It consists of people who are, first of all, united on the basic program of Trotskyism. The second feature is that it is an inclusive and not an exclusive selection. It keeps the door open for all time for the assimilation and development of new forces. It works out a division of labor which develops the latent abilities of comrades while at the same time not confronting them with challenges beyond their potential. It is marked by a closeness of collaboration, and a strength which arises not from the perfection of individual members but from its character as a combination and a balancing both of the faults and the virtues of the leadership. That is the cadre concept of leadership.

Responsibilities of Membership

A cadre movement is marked by the development of levels of leadership encompassing the entire membership. Beyond the central and most experienced cadres, a wide range of the membership is involved in responsible posts in branches and branch activities, a wider range yet in leadership roles in external propaganda work and activities of the movement in external organizations. As the movement grows qualitatively the demands on the membership increases in pace. A movement such as the NDP requires leaflet ters, doorknockers, but has no use for leaders outside the narrow and closed circle of its leadership cliques.

A vanguard party is a movement of comrades at different levels in their experience and the responsibilities they hold – but nonetheless a cadre movement, a movement of leaders.

The movement must educate its members to assimilate the

seriousness and historic import of its task, and help them to come to the movement with an understanding and respect for the tradition and accumulated knowledge it incorporates. It must guard against the danger that comrades can lose sight of its basic goals and of their original purpose in joining its ranks. They can come to look on the movement as a sounding board for their pet ideas, an endless discussion club, an arena for the pursuit of personal ambitions through cliques or even factional formations.

The movement must keep its great historic purpose in focus in all internal discussions, and demand loyalty to the movement as first condition of membership. This loyalty is concretized above all by a consciousness of the need to preserve the unity of the movement and its cadres. This unity, this confidence in the collective leadership and the destiny of the movement cannot be achieved by fiat or through simple experience; it must be consciously built. The party may make mistakes, perhaps of great seriousness; it may at times fall behind the pace of the class struggle. But our confidence rests not in the belief that it is infallible, but rather that its program is correct and necessary and it has the inner resources to correct its errors.

Inevitable personal frictions and differences within the leadership must not be allowed to obscure the collective character of the leadership as a unity of faults as well as strengths, a leadership whose power resides in its collective capacity rather than in the perfection or extraordinary ability of this or that individual. Loyalty to the movement means conscious work to preserve and educate the precious forces already accumulated. It also requires an understanding of the political character of cadre building. Personal "sensitivity" and individual understandings are no substitute for honest, open and political relationships in the party's ranks.

Discussions and disputes are a necessary aspect of party education and growth. Members must conduct them in a manner such as to maintain the unity of the movement, avoid unnecessary formation of factions or hardening of factions, and the building of the party's confidence in its collective leadership.

The Democratic Centralist Character of the Movement

Our 1968 resolution on the *"Organizational Character of the LSA-LSO"* summarized the organizational principles on which our party will be built: "It must be a centralized party, guided by the principles of democratic centralism under a central leadership. Only a self-acting and critically-minded membership is capable of forging and consolidating such a party and solving its problems in collective thought, discussion and experience. From this follows the

need of assuring the widest party democracy in the ranks of the organization."

"Only a party with complete discipline in all public activities under a strong and firm leadership and centralized direction with the power to act promptly and effectively in the name of the party and to supervise, coordinate and direct all its activities without exception, can lead the class to power."

Democracy and centralism are not warring opposites to be balanced against one another in the party's functioning, "The NDP leaderships blatant disregard for convention decisions shows the phoniness of the democratic trappings of non-centralist organizations. Only in a centralist movement can the membership have confidence that majority decisions will be applied, and that they reflect not manipulated blocks of paper memberships but the accurate expression of party activist views. On the other hand, the voluntary discipline and highly conscious and self-acting membership required for centralist functioning are possible only through full and democratic process of discussion. Confidence in the leadership flows from their democratic election by the membership and responsibility to them.

The Uneven Development of the Party

The mass party will not develop as the product simply of the steady one-by-one recruitment we now experience. We will go through periods of qualitative growth, of sudden leaps forward, which will alternate with periods of assimilation.

A good indication of the approaching period of rapid expansion is the motion of entire groups of radicals towards our program. We reject the concept that aims to encompass such forces in an all-inclusive organization of "revolutionaries," without a principled programmatic foundation. The road to unity of revolutionaries moving towards us lies first in common action around areas of agreement, which brings such forces to the basic program of Trotskyism, laying the basis for principled fusion.

Fusion with other groups can unite us with forces more dynamic in many ways, more integrated in the mass struggles. We have known three such experiences since our last convention, The leaderships of two significant regional socialist organizations, the New Brunswick Socialists and the Saskatchewan Committee for a Movement fused with us, bringing us valuable new leaders with important experiences In their areas. In an even more ambitious move, we reconstituted the Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes in early 1969 to encompass a whole layer of young militants moving towards us. This fusion was correctly conceived – yet we lost almost all the forces thus gained. The Quebec cadre was as yet too weak to assimilate them rapidly and the opportunity was lost. The lesson is clear – no fusion is stronger than the cadre which must provide the basis for consolidation.

A routine and mechanical approach to party building can never break us free of our present limitations. Our policy must be innovative, flexible and aggressive, both in the character of our work and our organizational functioning. But as the

LJS experience proved, rapid growth does not solve the problem of party building, it only poses it. Assimilating new forces depends on the strength of the cadre, its loyalty to the party and sense of party unity.

Our Areas of Intervention

A broad range of possibilities for our intervention in popular actions have opened up in the recent period. We have moved into those areas where we can make contact with forces moving towards revolutionary positions and around questions where the class struggle is posed at the most developed level. Thus we have developed our work in the trade unions and the NDP, the "basic organizations of the working class," and in the student movement, a main area of present radicalization. We have intervened to build the movement for women's liberation, now emerging as a crucial factor in the radicalization of large numbers of women. We have oriented to building the Quebec nationalist movement, and to the defense of the Vietnamese revolution, the key question of world politics today. The widening of the class struggle will soon open up new areas for our work.

We aim to take the leadership in these movements. But how? We reject the concept of seeking and taking leadership posts by accommodating ourselves to the present level of consciousness of these movements and the ignorance or prejudice of present leaders. We do not substitute gaining posts and officership for the essential tasks of developing bases of support in such movements. We refuse to hide our program for such purposes. Those who have followed this path have only found themselves captives of the movement they orient to, and forced into the crassest opportunism. Our strategy is to win these movements to our basic transitional program for each area and to win the leadership on the basis of our program. Leadership so won can take us forward and draw new forces into the struggle and into our movement. So in the anti-war movement we first won acceptance of our program by the vital and militant elements ("Withdraw U.S. Troops Now " and "End Canadian Complicity") and thus laid the basis for taking organizational leadership of the movement.

Intervening to Build our Forces

It is not possible for revolutionaries to substitute themselves for the mass movement, to skip over the necessary stage of working through existing mass formations. We see no perspective in launching actions with no clear programmatic content in the vague hope that they will spark confrontations which will suffice to produce a revolutionary understanding. Panicky, improvised and hastily abandoned campaigns aimed at leaping over our present limitations, and those of the mass movement, are no substitute for methodical party building, and intervention in mass action in harmony with the objective possibilities. Such policy leads to unpredictable flip-flops in orientation and dispersal of our forces – and can only be explained

as revealing a fundamental lack of confidence in our movement and the class.

We cannot, as a mass party must, attempt to take responsibility for every area of struggle. 'We must resist pressures to dissipate our forces and exhaust them in projects which do not renew our strength and build our numbers. We must aim to "be everywhere" and touch every significant arena with our propaganda — but without necessarily taking responsibility to build such movements or throwing substantial forces into them. So often only a touch is enough to make contact with the best elements. Our work areas are carefully chosen to promote the spreading of our ideas and recruitment to our movement. An orientation to a given political formation, e.g., the NDP, does not mean that it must be a major work area, that we must commit the bulk of our forces to it. Our orientation can be chiefly propagandistic in periods where there seems little possibility for fruitful intervention.

Conclusion

All experience shows that no automatic process will lead mankind to socialism without the intervention of a vanguard party. Theories of gradual reform have proven illusory, as have concepts that the mechanical operation of some single factor; the colonial revolution perhaps, a profound economic crisis, will suffice to bring the entire old system down in ruins. So nor can we rely on the objective situation for revolutionary struggle to become steadily more favorable. Capitalist decay creates the conditions for socialist victory, but it can also lead to stalemate, to massive economic decay and the resulting tendency to attrition of the power of the working class – and ultimately to fascist barbarism or world nuclear destruction.

Victorious socialist revolutions – Cuba, etc. – give us every reason for complete confidence in the capacity of the working class to resolve this crisis. But at the same time they point out that this depends on its capacity to build a revolutionary vanguard, where the intervention of the conscious revolutionaries is decisive.

We are well on the road to building this party in Canada. We have made great progress, and there are opportunities before us for rapid growth. But opportunities not seized will pass away; old leadership, if not challenged at the opportune moment can re-establish its hegemony. A defeat in a revolutionary crisis, like that in Germany in 1933 which permitted the triumph of Nazism, can set back the struggle for a generation or more — and the decay of imperialism will not grant us unlimited time to resolve the crisis of leadership,

The extension of our movement, the consolidation and growth of its cadre in the next years will be crucial in determining our possibilities for the whole coming period. And our work here is a significant and vital influence in the building of the world party of socialist revolution. The Fourth International in its founding document noted that "the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership." From our success in resolving this crisis, through the building of the revolutionary party here and around the world, will

ultimately hang the fate of mankind.